

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of August 9, 2016

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair K. David Maxwell, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Nathan Freeman, Matthew Gadbois, and Kenneth W. Goslant. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Highway Foreman Trent Tucker, Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter, Nicholas Laskovski, Kristen Getler, Ophelia Laskovski, Jeffrey Ott, Steve Davis, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED)**

- a. **Nicholas Laskovski: Request to Waive Alcohol Ban on Municipal Property for Wedding Reception.** Mr. Laskovski and his fiancée Kristen Getler are planning to get married in August 2017. They would like to hold their wedding reception in the Falls Park on Saturday, August 19, 2017. However, there is a policy that prohibits use of alcoholic beverages on municipal property. Mr. Laskovski and Ms. Getler would like the Select Board to waive this policy for this one event. Selectman Gadbois asked if there would be insurance coverage for the reception. Mr. Laskovski has already contacted his insurance company about this and will have the coverage in place should the Select Board approve his request. Selectman Gadbois asked if the reception would have outside catering. Mr. Laskovski said that there would be. The Three Penny Taproom in Montpelier already has been asked for a quote and he will seek others. If possible, he would like to go local so he also will be contacting the Falls General Store, the Cornerstone Burger Company, etc. Selectman Freeman felt it might be a good idea to postpone approval until the documentation behind this alcohol ban has been consulted and reviewed. He had no other objections. Selectman Goslant did not feel any delay was needed as the Select Board often waives local ordinances for special events when requested. The event is more than a year away so all ground work can be made in plenty of time. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the lifting of the alcohol ban on municipal property for this event provided that any further research does not reveal any other legal impediments and with the condition that there will be adequate insurance coverage in place with no liability for the municipality. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT**

- a. **Highway Foreman Trent Tucker.** Mr. Tucker reported that the Highway crew has been very busy on a number of projects including culvert replacement, grading, crosswalk painting, the removal of a large tree on Turkey Hill, etc. Selectman Gadbois asked if Mr. Tucker had any recommendations regarding winter sand and crushed gravel. Regardless of who will be supplying the material, Mr. Tucker would like his crew to pick up the material themselves from the suppliers' pits in order to avoid extra delivery charges. There always is at least one crew member available to pick up the material.

Selectman Freeman noted that the proposed Water Street River Park project would require a lot of excavation as part of its flood hazard mitigation phase. He asked if the Highway Department might be able to do this work as in-kind services in order to meet the \$45,000 local match amount for the state grant already on hand. Mr. Tucker would like to see the project plans before committing himself but felt that it probably could be done. Manager Schulz noted that the project plans remain in the early stages but should be finalized in the next couple months. It will then be known what kinds of in-kind services are eligible to meet the local match amount. Selectman Freeman felt that there is a real need to plan ahead on this because the aforementioned state grant has a summer 2017 deadline for work competition. He also wanted to know what would happen if the dollar value of the in-kind services exceeds the local match amount. Manager Schulz said that the excess amount would be reimbursed to the municipality and treated as additional revenue.

Selectman Gadbois asked about the status of the backroad tree removal project. Mr. Tucker has spoken to Bruce Limlaw and he will be coming to Northfield this week to look over the project's test site on Winch Hill Road. Since the adjoining property owners now have the option of keeping the downed trees, Mr. Tucker is unsure whether Limlaw Pulpwood would still be interested in cutting the trees down at no cost to the municipality if they cannot keep the wood themselves.

Selectman Goslant believes the Highway crew should focus on road maintenance rather than get involved in park projects, etc. He added that the Highway Committee, on which he and Selectman Gadbois serve, will be meeting this Thursday morning (08/11/16) and will discuss proposed road paving; winter sand and crushed gravel bids; etc. Selectman Goslant believes Mr. Tucker is doing an outstanding job with the resources he has on hand. He then asked what Mr. Tucker would like from the Select Board to make his job easier. Mr. Tucker would like additional funds in the crushed gravel budget along with a go ahead to start working on fixing the paved roads. He added that his current level of manpower was acceptable and his crew is on schedule with the work planned for this summer. Chair Maxwell thanked Mr. Tucker for the update and asked him to keep up the good work.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **July 26, 2016 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #04-17.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #04-17 in the amount of \$270,295.36. Selectman Doney noted a \$32,000 lease payment for the loader. Manager Schulz said that the Select Board agreed to a lease/purchase agreement for this vehicle that is spread over five (5) years. Selectman Doney noted a payment to Farr's Tree Service to remove a tree. Manager Schulz said that this was a very large tree and the Highway Department did not have appropriate equipment to do the work. Selectman Gadbois noted a ladder truck repair expense that he felt should have been paid using Fire Department CIP funds. Manager Schulz said that since this was a rebuild, it was considered to be regular maintenance that should be covered by operating funds. Selectman Gadbois saw an electric expense for operating the wellfield pumps and asked if there was any chance of operating them with solar power. Selectman Freeman said that the Utility Commission has looked into siting solar farms in Northfield but the wellfield location was not under consideration. Selectman Goslant wanted it noted that about half of the warrant amount is for purchase of power for the Northfield Electric Department. Since this power will be resold to customers, this cannot be considered a real expense. Chair Maxwell asked if SymQuest has finished upgrading the municipal computer servers. Manager Schulz said the project was completed a couple weeks ago and came in under budget. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #04-17A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #04-17A in the amount of \$10,010.45. Chair Maxwell noted that this was related to a flood buyout grant and was a "pass through" payment and not a real expense. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through July 31, 2016.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$85,928.33. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Ambulance Cab and Chassis Purchase.** Manager Schulz said that as previously authorized by the Select Board, the Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) is looking to replace the cab and chassis on the 1989 rescue unit. NAS Chief Lawton Rutter said that the decision for this came out of the last budget discussions. Chief Rutter sought and received four (4) bids from suppliers that ranged from \$40,783 to \$45,363. G. Stone Motors (Middlebury, VT) was the low bidder as they will provide a \$2000 credit for the trade-in of the old chassis and Chief Rutter recommends purchasing from them. If authorized tonight, the vehicle would be delivered and ready for service in January 2017.

Selectman Gadbois asked if Chief Rutter looked at any military surplus equipment. Chief Rutter did not as he wanted to deal with suppliers that could provide at least a seven (7) year warranty. Selectman Gadbois asked if Chief Rutter had made any grant applications for this purchase. Chief Rutter did not since there are limited grant funds for emergency vehicle purchases. He did make a grant application related to the upcoming tanker truck purchase since that would be a much greater expense. He added that Homeland Security grants usually are for radios or other communication systems and not the vehicles themselves. Chief Rutter said that he does keep track of any possible grant opportunities.

Selectman Freeman asked how the NAS budget is doing for revenue. Manager Schulz noted that the last fiscal year (2015-2016) is now being closed and Finance Director Laurie Baroffio will provide a full report on expenses and revenues at the next meeting (08/23/16). Chief Rutter added that it is hard to determine an exact figure as of a certain date since insurance payments are often delayed, etc. Given the higher number of calls and transports the NAS had this past year, he believes there will be surplus funds even if he doesn't know the exact amount. Motion by Selectman Freeman, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to authorize Manager Schulz and Chief Rutter to enter into an ambulance cab and chassis purchase agreement with G. Stone Motors for an amount not to exceed \$40,783. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Chief Rutter thanked the Select Board for this authorization as it will go a long way towards extending the longevity of his fleet.

- b. **Paving Projects.** Manager Schulz said the Select Board has been discussing paving priorities quite a lot at its most recent meetings. It is his recommendation that the Select Board authorize the expenditure of \$99,000 to provide a shim coat on about seven thousand feet (7000') of the worst sections of Union Brook Road. There now is \$85,000 in the paving budget and Manager Schulz has found funding sources to cover the shortfall. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Freeman, to authorize spending \$99,000 to pave about seven thousand feet (7000') of Union Brook Road. Selectman Goslant would like to hold off on this decision until the Highway Committee has held their meeting on Thursday morning. There are other bad roads in Northfield and he would like to look at a comprehensive plan that might involve borrowing funds. Selectman Gadbois felt that since this was already August, he did not want any further delays in repairing the worst parts of Union Brook Road. Selectman Goslant said that Finance Director Baroffio would be at this committee meeting to inform them how much money is actually on hand, the most expedient way to borrow additional funds, etc. He would like the general discussion to move beyond Union Brook Road. Selectman Freeman likes the idea of creating a comprehensive plan that will address the entire road system, focus on drainage issues, etc. However, given the extent of problems now on Union Brook Road, he would like to move forward on fixing its problems now and holding off on any future paving projects until next spring. **Motion passed 3-2-0, with Selectmen Goslant and Maxwell voting in the negative.** Selectman Doney would like to be sure that any culvert work needed in the parts of Union Brook Road to be paved will be done beforehand so the new work will not have to be disturbed later.
- c. **Winter Sand & Crushed Gravel Bid Proposals.** Chair Maxwell said that this will be tabled so that the Highway Committee can discuss this at its upcoming meeting and provide a recommendation to the full Select Board.
- d. **Norwich University Request to Lift Parking Bans for Homecoming and Parent/Family Weekends.** Norwich University (NU) has submitted its annual request that the parking bans on Crescent Avenue and Central Street be lifted during Homecoming and Parent/Family weekends, which will be September 16-18 and September 30-October 2 (respectively) this year. When this request was made last year, there were concerns raised regarding the amount of congestion on lower Central Street during the football games, which sometimes makes two-way traffic impossible. Approval was given with the condition that NU Security have one of its employees in the Plumley Armory parking lot from 7:00 a.m. to one-half hour after the game ends. Since this seemed to have the desired effect last year, the Select Board would this condition as part of its approval this year as well. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the parking ban lifting request with the condition indicated above. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Brown Public Library (BPL) Roof Problems.** Selectman Freeman asked if the library roof was still leaking. Manager Schulz said that he had someone do some patching a couple weeks ago but additional leaks were seen after the most recent storm. These will be repaired soon and Manager Schulz is looking into getting quotes to replace the roof.
- b. **Memorial Park Nighttime Security.** Selectman Doney believes that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) has the responsibility to lock the park's gate at night but this has not been happening lately. He is concerned about the municipality being held responsible if someone decides to swim (and perhaps drown) in the municipal pool after closing hours. Manager Schulz will contact the NPD about this.
- c. **Removal of Damaged Tree.** Chair Maxwell read a complaint on social media about a mailbox being destroyed and tree being removed without the landowner's permission. Manager Schulz said that the tree and a mailbox were damaged by an unknown vehicle. Given the tree's proximity to power lines, it was the determination of Green Mountain Power (GMP) and Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi that the tree had to be cut down. Chair Maxwell felt strongly that the property owner should have been contacted before this was done. Also, it might be a good idea that this be municipal policy in the future.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. There were no questions regarding Manager Schulz's report.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)

- a. **Jeffrey Ott: Road Paving.** Mr. Ott lives on Bear Farm Road and has to travel on Union Brook Road every day to get to his home. He noted that the road has been patched several times this year without much effect. He is grateful that the municipality will be shim paving part of the road this year but wanted to know when the whole road would be paved down to the base. Selectman Gadbois did not think this would get done next year but this probably would be part of the new comprehensive road paving plan that the Highway Committee will be developing. Chair Maxwell added that drainage problems have contributed much to Union Brook Road's poor condition and this also will be addressed in the long-term plan. Mr. Ott feels that it might be necessary to raise property taxes slightly to pay for all the paving work that needs to be done. Selectman Goslant noted that Northfield already has the seventh highest property tax rates in the state. Steve Davis thought that Union Brook was in good condition for about ten (10) years after it was last paved but after then was allowed to deteriorate due to neglect. If roads are regularly maintained, they should not fall apart so quickly.
- b. **Steve Davis, BPL Air Conditioning.** Mr. Davis noted that the library's air conditioning has been going full blast throughout this meeting. This has not only made the room very cold but also has made it difficult for members of the audience to hear the discussion. Chair Maxwell said that he also was planning to talk to Manager Schulz about this after the meeting. Manager Schulz will look into the problem.

XII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn.
Motion passed 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of August 23, 2016.